DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 171 449 RC 011 334

TITLE	Service Delivery to Elderly Mexican-Americans.
INSTITUTION	Texas Univ., Austin. Center for Social Work Research.
SPONS AGENCY	Texas State Dept. of Human Resources, Austin.
PUB DATE	Jul 77
NOTE	48p.
EDRS PRICE	MF01/PC02 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS	*Caseworker Approach; Caseworkers; Community Characteristics; Coping; *Cross Cultural Training; *Cultural Background; Cultural Differences; Cultural Factors; Demography; Family Life; Human Services; *Instructional Materials; *Mexican Americans; Needs Assessment; *Older Adults; *Senior Citizens; Social Services; Social Work; Sociocultural Patterns
IDENTIFIERS	Barrios; Curanderismo; Hispanics

ABSTRACT

A curriculum examining various aspects of the Mexican American culture was designed for a training program conducted by the Texas Department of Public Welfare for its case workers and other personnel. Intended to heighten awareness of the cultural variables affecting the relationship of Mexican American clients to case workers and to the utilization of social services, the curriculum is arranged into four modules which may be conducted in two full days or in four half-day sessions. The first provides an introduction to the Mexican American household and culture; describes family traditions, values, the Curanderismo healing practices and coping mechanisms; and examines traditional cultural views and traits. The second module looks at patterns of Mexican American life and includes demographic characteristics, as well as facts and statistics relating to facets of an elderly Mexican person's daily life. It helps the caseworker identify probable needs of the elderly and assess their coping abilities. The Mexican American community is the subject of the third module. It lists resources as well as undesirable characteristics of the barrio and identifies potential obstacles to effective interaction with elderly Mexican Americans. The final module deals with Mexican civil rights and trends influencing the present social status of the Mexican American. Each of the four modules presents opportunities for discussion to exchange ideas and opinions. (DS)

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Service Delivery to Elderly Mexican-Americans

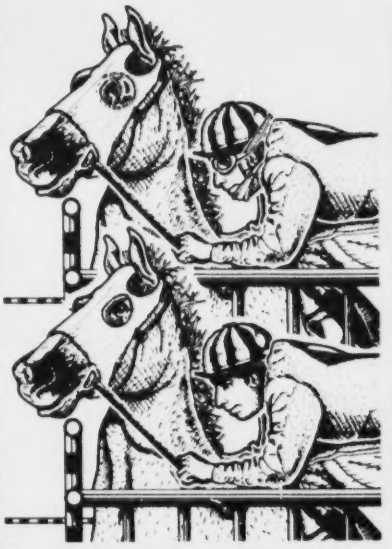
Texas State Department of Public Welfare

July 1977

RC011334

1.0 The Hispanic Culture of America

1.1 Get Ready Get Set



Program Purpose:

The Graduate School of Social Work, University of Houston, was informed by training personnel of the Department of Public Welfare of a need for new approaches to staff training in order to heighten awareness on the part of caseworkers and other Department of Public Welfare personnel concerning cultural variables affecting the relationship of Mexican-American clients to workers and to the utilization of social services. The Graduate School of Social Work, having devoted considerable energy to creating classroom curriculum in this area, has responded by providing consultation to development of a training strategy and the final curriculum product.

The curriculum development process followed in this project was traditional in nature, yet innovative in several respects. It drew from sound demographic assessment surveys. Continuous monitoring and modification were made possible by input from clientele as well as from caseworkers across the state. An underlying assumption of the project was that the curriculum content be tied to the day-to-day experiences of the Department of Public Welfare workers in a specific program. This curriculum is therefore program-oriented for adult social service workers.

Design and Suggested Use:

The curriculum is arranged into four separate modules which may be conducted in two full days or in four half-day sessions, depending on local scheduling requirements. The modules consist of numbered components in the following format:

1. a general introduction to the module's content (videotape);

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2. a lecture or slide presentation dealing with the same content above, but in more specific terms oriented to casework;
3. a discussion session for exchange of ideas and opinions.

The content is necessary for substance, but open discussion is essential to the successful learning process. Since culture is often a sensitive topic, the participant must feel free to bring his opinions and beliefs out into the open in order to consider the content objectively.

Goal:

The goal is to help Department of Public Welfare personnel in their interaction with, and service delivery to, elderly Mexican-Americans.

Objectives:

Given a description of a Mexican-American client's household, the participant will be able to:

1. Identify and understand extended family patterns;
2. Identify aspects of *Curanderismo* and understand their implications;
3. List five coping skills which are problematic to elderly Mexican-Americans and understand their influence on client relations;
4. Distinguish between intrinsic and extrinsic cultural traits;
5. Understand how urbanization, migration, discrimination, and immigration have affected the Mexican-American's present status and attitudes;
6. List at least three American civil rights documents which have particular significance for Mexican-American clients.

Evaluation:

There will be two evaluation forms, one before and one after the delivery of the curriculum, for comparison:

1. The pre-evaluation is confidential and will be retained by the participant. The sole purpose is for comparison with the post-evaluation.
2. The post-evaluation is completed after the curriculum is delivered, and is handed in to the Educational Director for scoring and recording.

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Service Delivery to Elderly
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1977

PRE-EVALUATION

Answer below the following questions. Retain this confidential form for comparison with the Post-Evaluation after the curriculum.

1. What percentage of Mexican-Americans in Texas are from Mexico?

2. How might the Mexican-American's extended family affect his attitude toward the Department of Public Welfare?
3. What is an extended family?

4. What factors could explain the Mexican-American's level of education in Texas?

5. What are the basic coping skills which may severely affect the ability of elderly Mexican-Americans to obtain welfare services?

6. How is the culture of poverty described by Oscar Lewis different *in its development* from the traditional Mexican culture?

7. How might *curanderismo* influence an elderly Mexican-American's attitude toward the Department of Public Welfare?

8. Which civil rights documents are of particular concern to the Mexican-American client?

9. What are the aspects or resources of the barrio which may influence an elderly Mexican-American's view of social welfare?

10. Write one word which best describes your frank opinion of the Mexican-American culture as regards Department of Public Welfare service delivery.

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A Visit to the Mexican-American Home

1.2

Topic: Introduction to the Mexican-American household and culture

Objectives:

1. Describe the Mexican-American extended family.
2. Define and know background of *curanderismo*.
3. List at least three coping skills and know how they may be problematic to elderly Mexican-Americans.

Activity: Videotape

The Mexican-American Family

An extended family is one which includes more than two generations living in the same household. Many modern Mexican-Americans were reared in households which included their grandparents, their parents, an uncle or aunt, and maybe even their own children—four generations under one roof. No one knows how many Mexican-Americans in Texas still live in such traditionally structured families. The 1970 Census found that six percent of the Mexican-American families in Texas (twice the average in the state) are extended families. Regardless of the actual predominance of the extended family, however, the elderly Mexican-Americans often retain the old values, practices, and attitudes which may strongly influence their interface with modern society.

The Spanish expeditions which founded Texas in the 1700's brought entire extended families of Spaniards to settle such communities as San Antonio, Goliad, Victoria, Laredo, and Nacogdoches. In some cases, civilized tribes of the Aztec nation also brought their own tribal families called *calpulli* (pronounced: kal POO yee) to settle in these same communities. These colonies established neighborhoods or barrios which remained very closely knit for over a century in the

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same location. Some families are still living in the same neighborhoods or lands.

The Spanish and Aztec families usually intermarried, producing the mixed-blood or *mestizo* (mess TEE so) race, but family structure and patterns remained fixed. The eldest male was the patriarch demanding authority and the respect of all his sons, daughters, and grandchildren. His sons might marry, but the rugged life in frontier Texas demanded that they remain on the old man's estate or *rancho* for the defense of the family. Thus the male's role was one of strength and prestige. Large families were at a premium and it was assumed that brother and sister, father and son would always provide for one another. When the grandparent becamed aged and disabled, his sons and grandchildren knew they should provide for him. Government played a minimal role in family security.

Many modern Mexican-Americans have retained the traditional values of the extended family; consequently, they may totally disregard or even shun alternatives for the services once provided by the family. In some cases, however, migration and urbanization have separated the families, leaving the elderly stranded in urban apartment settings. These elderly Mexican-Americans are in great need of family and social services; yet many of them do not request aid simply because public assistance is so foreign to their upbringing and experience.

Curanderismo (koor ahn der EES mo)

Curanderismo is the Mexican practice of home remedies and faith healing which often involves prayer and the use of medicinal herbs. Recent surveys in San Antonio, Austin, El Paso, and the Rio Grande Valley indicate the existence of curanderismo practices, especially among elderly Mexican-Americans. As other ethnic or folk remedies, some curanderismo remedies work for obvious reasons, some work despite the disbelief of modern scientists, and others serve no other purpose than to give psychological relief to the patient. In any case, such customs reflect cultural heritage, and should be dealt with as cautiously as any other sensitive belief.

Mexican-American curanderismo dates back to Aztec practice. Many elderly Mexican-Americans in Texas still talk about having *empacho, mal ojo,* or *aire*—illnesses peculiar to the Mexican culture. Just as their Aztec ancestors, some modern Mexican-Americans still treat a stomach ache with tea made from *estafiate* or *ruda* leaves. Many of the modern medicines in American pharmacology are derived from the same Aztec herbs. Thus a Mexican-American may wish to take a spoonful of Kaopectate brand medicine made by the Upjohn company or he may prefer to take the old Indian tea made from pectin, the ingredient used by Upjohn, as his ancestors did.

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In most cases, elderly Mexican-Americans recognize the substantial difference between penicillin and *estafiate* tea, but they continue to grow the herbs in flower beds and backyard gardens. These plants give the home a fragrance, a distinct greenery, and a ready source of herbs and spices for traditional Mexican recipes as well.

The person who administers the treatment is the *curandero* (koor ahn DER o). Usually a respected citizen among the elderly in the barrio, the *curandero* offers prayer, advice, and a reassuring voice. His influence is not insignificant despite dubious medicinal value.

Coping Mechanisms

Coping mechanisms are those skills and facilities which enable a person to function within a society. They include language, specialized knowledge, literacy, transportation, and communication. They may also include owning a car or telephone, the ability to dial a telephone, the ability or willingness to fill out an application form, confidence in riding in an elevator or airplane, and hundreds of other such learned activities which many people take for granted. Some coping mechanisms are based on cultural factors; thus a person's color, language, or distinctive dress may present severe handicaps in some societies or advantages in others.

Elderly Mexican-Americans, as many elderly citizens, suffer from the lack of coping mechanisms. The Mexican-American's problem is compounded in part by the lasting effects of racial discrimination in Texas. Elderly Mexican-Americans rarely enjoyed the opportunity of a public school education when they were young. As a result, many of them are illiterate in English and Spanish. Most of them speak very little or incorrect English. Recent surveys in San Antonio and Austin indicate that elderly Mexican-Americans are understandably hesitant to speak the few English words they have learned informally. Today's society is not responsible for yesterday's discrimination, but perhaps modern Americans can be more understanding when an elderly Mexican-American hesitates to use English.

Other factors limiting the coping ability of Mexican-Americans include the results of years of poverty and manual labor. For these and many other reasons, the elderly Mexican-Americans have been on the periphery of American society, thus perpetuating the situation.

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1.3 The Role of Culture

Topic: Definition and explanation of culture in interpersonal relations

Objectives:

1. Define culture
2. Describe the different views (traditional, assimilation, conflict) of Mexican-American culture
3. Distinguish between intrinsic and extrinsic cultural traits
4. Distinguish between traditional Mexican cultural traits and culture of poverty traits.

Activity: Lecture-slide presentation

Culture

"Culture," as stated by Milton M. Gordon, "refers to the social heritage of man - the ways of acting and the ways of doing things which are passed down from one generation to the next." (Gordon, *Assimilation*, 1964) This heritage is taught or demonstrated informally by parents and peers, and is learned through a process called socialization. Culture includes beliefs, art, morals, customs, values, knowledge, skills, and any other behavior patterns which are acceptable within a society. One of the most important aspects of culture is that it is dynamic. That is, it is constantly changing, and the rate of change is different from one person to the next. A great difficulty in describing or discussing a given culture is the temptation to speak of it as a static or monolithic rule of life which is firm and fast. Such a view leads to stereotyping the members of that culture.

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Stereotype

A stereotype is "a category that singles out an individual as sharing certain assumed characteristics on the basis of his group membership." (Vander Zanden, *American Minority Relations*, 1966, p. 80) For example, if a person is a Mexican-American, he is assumed to have a Spanish surname. Acutally, many Mexican-Americans have Anglo-Saxon, German, Irish, or other surnames. In such cases, the stereotype assumption is incorrect.

Stereotypes can be erroneous, distorted, even naive or harmful. If a person assumes that because they are called Mexican-Americans, all Mexican-Americans were indeed born in Mexico, then he is distorting reality. Relatively few Mexican-Americans were born in Mexico; most Mexican-American families have been in the United States for decades; many came to this land directly from Europe; and many are descended from blood lines native to North America. Mexican-American families in Texas are of several national origins.

Stereotypes are often perpetuated by seemingly harmless jokes or sayings. Thus a corn chip product advertisement may depict a Mexican as a "bandito." Unfortunately, this ad would reinforce the negative stereotype in the mind of important persons such as employers, judges, and policemen.

If a social worker encounters many elderly Mexican-Americans who do not actively seek out the services of the Welfare Department, he may begin to assume that none of the elderly Mexican-Americans want or need the services. Or he may accept the easy rationale that "The Mexican is too proud." Such a stereotype would lead the social worker to disregard many needs of his clients. The only solution is for the social worker to assure first that he is not contributing to the problem by stereotyping, and next to treat each person as an individual.

An "On-the-spot Cultural Assessment"

What is the Mexican-American culture? There are several ways to describe the Mexican-American culture, but the only safe way is to remember that each person, regardless of culture, is an individual. A convenient approach is for social workers to know the various traits of the culture, and then to assess each individual in view of those traits. For example, if the Mexican-American culture is said to practice curanderismo, a social worker might ask, "Does this particular client practice curanderismo?" Fernando Peñalosa suggests that one ask himself, "To what extent. . ." does a Mexican-American actually practice a given cultural trait. (Peñalosa, "Definition of the Mexican-American," *Aztlan*.)

Cultural Models

The traditional view or model of the Mexican-American culture is largely a popular stereotype. This view was promulgated by early Hollywood movies, biased historical accounts, and some anthropologists who failed to emphasize the dynamic character of culture. According to this view, the typical Mexican-American was short, dark, Catholic, born in Mexico, and cared little for education or material well-being. Mexican-American men were indirect and scheming but macho, and the women were totally subservient.

Another perspective described the Mexican-American in terms of assimilation. The assimilation model maintains that although most Mexican-Americans were still in the traditional cultural mold described earlier, many were beginning to accept the values and patterns of Anglo-American life. They were assimilating, according to this model, and the logical result was that eventually all Mexican-Americans would shed their former Mexican traits and simply "melt" into American society.

A third model of the Mexican-American culture, put forth largely by Chicano intellectuals in the 1960's, maintains that the Mexican-American culture was molded by heritage plus conflict. According to this perspective, Mexican-Americans have been exploited, colonized, and abused by a racist system in the United States. Thus, the Mexican-Americans have been economically subjugated but culturally defiant.

Each of these models offers some cogent facts, but none is entirely correct or incorrect. Rather than to try to describe the Mexican-American culture as a homogeneous state of being, it is safer to identify the traits in a particular individual. It is possible for one Mexican-American to possess traits of all three models. The cultural traits of a Mexican-American client should be assessed from an open-ended perspective. One client may speak no English, shun assimilation entirely, but speak highly of American capitalism and technology. Another may speak excellent English, be educated, but want nothing to do with government agencies. Much depends on which end of the American system a person has experienced.

Different, not Worse

Ethnocentricity is when a person evaluates another culture in terms of his own cultural values. For example, if his own culture values a cow very highly as prime beef for the table, an ethnocentric person might criticize another culture for "wasting" ceremonial cows as religious figures. An ethnocentric person might say that his beliefs are "religion" while the beliefs of another person are pure "superstition."

All cultures have their own way of doing things. The Eskimos kiss by rubbing noses. Russian men often meet

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by kissing mouth to mouth. Japanese greet by bowing. Americans hold their fork in either hand to eat, depending on whether they are right-handed or left-handed. Turks frown on such ambidexterity. American Boy Scouts call themselves Bears, Wolves, and Bobcats. These names would be unthinkable for people in a Mohammedan society. Each society prescribes the standard or normal behavior for its members. As long as a person remains within his cultural group, he is rewarded for learning and following the established behavior patterns.

When a person enters another culture group, however, he may find himself practicing inappropriate norms. The customs and values he used all of his life are suddenly ostracized or punished. He finds himself being forced to learn new skills or coping mechanisms. In a rapidly changing society like America, the time-lag in learning the new coping mechanisms is even more pronounced.

An interesting aspect of culture is the way it is borrowed from one society to another. When American writer Josiah Gregg first traveled the Old Santa Fe Trail and met the Mexicans in the 1820's, he was repulsed to report that the women wore lip rouge, smoked cigarettes, revealed their ankles, and ate tacos by holding them in their fingers without a fork. Today most women dress this way, and even Amy Vanderbilt would have difficulty eating a crisp taco with a fork. Americans have also learned to wear high-heeled boots, spurs, and big hats when working cattle by horseback.

Mexicans learned much from the Americans in the 1820's as well. They learned about the jury system, capitalism, and technology. In fact, the cultural exchange in the early 1800's was so great that it is often difficult to trace the traits to one culture. For example, beans and chili are certainly Mexican, but barbeque is more difficult to trace. It may even be French. All of this cultural borrowing indicates that although another culture may be different, it is not necessarily worse.

Culture of Poverty

Many traits found in a culture such as the Mexican-American reflect its historic roots or heritage. These intrinsic traits include the Spanish language, the traditional customs, old beliefs, and attitudes about their own race and origin.

Whenever a culture group immigrates or comes into contact with another culture group, new traits are developed or borrowed. These added traits are extrinsic. Extrinsic traits are traits which are not part of the original cultural heritage, but are developed as a result of immigration, conflict, or contact with the other culture. They may include an accent in the new language, a kind of dress different from the old culture, and even a set of attitudes and values which developed as a result of the new minority status. Many Mexican-Americans

exhibit extrinsic tratis such as a Spanish accent in English, lack of education, and a sense of alienation from the government. These traits are not traditionally Mexican; they are more likely the result of poor education in the barrios and years of life in migrant work. Instead of making this distinction, however, most people mistakenly attribute the extrinsic traits to the Mexican heritage.

An interesting application of extrinsic traits is the idea of a culture of poverty proposed by anthropologist Oscar Lewis. In his studies of cultures around the world, Lewis was surprised by the striking similarity in the cultural traits exhibited by poor people. He suggested that there is a culture of poverty just as there is a culture of Mexicans, Eskimos, Anglo-Americans, Irish, or Turks. The poor, regardless of race or national origin, seem to have distinctive family structure, time orientation, and attitudes toward government, education, sanitation, etc.

It is important to distinguish between the intrinsic traits of the Mexican heritage and the extrinsic traits of a life in poverty. Failing to do so, a person may mistakenly assume that the poverty traits of many Mexican-Americans are to be found in all persons of Mexican heritage. Such a mistake could cause friction in intercultural relations. The safe course to follow is to assess the traits of each person as an individual.

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1.4 Let's Talk About It

Topic: Culture, the Mexican-American client, and the Department of Public Welfare

Objectives:

1. View and discuss culture objectively.
2. Consider another person's views on culture.
3. Identify popular stereotypes and tell how they may be harmful to clients.

Activity: Open discussion

Review

1. An extended family is one which includes_____generations living in the same household.

2. If only few Mexican-Americans live in extended family households, why is the extended family important to the elderly today?

3. Curanderismo is the Mexican practice of home remedies and faith healing which often involves_____and the use of_____.

4. Why would an elderly Mexican-American stubbornly cling to curanderismo when Medicaid is available?

5. The ability to dial a telephone, drive an automobile, and fill out an application are all examples of_____mechanisms.

6. How might the lack of coping mechanisms affect the Mexican-American's interface with the Department of Public Welfare?

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7. An intrinsic trait_____(is/is not) part of the cultural heritage.

8. The culture of poverty would be an example of _____(intrinsic/extrinsic) culture.

9. If the assimilation model of the Mexican-American culture maintains that the Mexican-American will assimilate, and the conflict model contends that racism prevents assimilation, which model is correct?

10. If an elderly Mexican-American client hesitates to speak English, what can a social worker safely assume about the client's attitude toward Anglo-Americans and the American government?

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2.0 Patterns of Mexican-American Life

General Characteristics of the Mexican-American

Topic: General Facts and Statistics of Mexican-Americans

Objectives:

1. List the three major factors of Mexican-American population growth in the 20th century.
2. Describe the basic demography of Mexican-Americans with regard to the United States, Texas, and urbanization.
3. List a major characteristic for the Mexican-American population in each of the following areas: nativity, education, poverty, and family.

Activity: Lecture–slide presentation

The latest government estimate of the Spanish surname population in the United States is 12 million. The United States Spanish surnamed thus rank fifth in the world, behind Spain, Mexico, Argentina, and Colombia and ahead of Peru, Venezuela, and Chile. Eighty-five percent of the Spanish surnamed in the United States live in the Southwest. Of all the states, California and Texas have the greatest numbers of Mexican-Americans, although many northern industrial states have registered increasing numbers throughout the 20th century.

Population Growth

There are three major factors in Mexican-American population growth in the 20th century:

1. **Nativity**: A substantial portion of the Mexican-American population is decended from the native Mexican populace which inhabited the present Southwest long before the coming of the Anglo-American.

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2. **Immigration**: Mexican immigrants have continued to enter the United States, making up about ten percent of the total immigration to this country throughout the 20th century.
3. **Birthrate**: Mexican-Americans have maintained the highest birthrate in the nation for decades.

These three factors have made the Mexican-American the nation's fastest growing and second largest ethnic minority today.

Geographic Patterns

Eighty-five percent of the estimated 12 million Spanish surname citizens, most of whom are Mexican-Americans, live in the Southwest. The Mexican-American population of Texas in 1970 was a little over two million, chiefly concentrated in counties along the Rio Grande and in the urban areas of the state. In fact, about 85 percent of the Mexican-Americans live in urban areas of Texas.

Population Characteristics

As a group, Mexican-Americans reflect distinctive characteristics in several key categories. As one investigative committee of the federal government reported on the Spanish speaking population, "It ranks at the bottom of the scale, absolutely last." (U.S., Cabinet Committee, *Annual Report*, 1971) Following are the basic social characteristics of this population group:

1. **Nativity**: Most of the Mexican-Americans are native-born. By 1960, over 85 percent of the nation's Mexican-Americans were natives of the United States, over 50 percent of them being of American parentage as well. In Texas, by 1970, 90 percent were Texas-born, 75 percent being of Texas parentage. Only nine percent of the Mexican-Americans in Texas in 1970 were born in Mexico. Despite this high nativity rate, however, Mexican-Americans exhibit the highest language and cultural "loyalty" among the nation's ethnic groups. In Texas, for example, 87 percent speak Spanish. This cultural persistence tends to perpetuate the stereotype of the Mexican-Americans as being foreigners.
2. **Education**: Mexican-Americans have the lowest level of education in the Southwest. In Texas, they have 7.2 years of education, compared to the 9.7 years for Blacks and 11.6 for Anglos. Thirty-three percent of the Mexican-Americans in Texas have less than five years of education. A recent study by the Civil Rights Commission revealed in 1969 that Texas school fi-

nancing alloted Mexican-American school districts only three-fifths as much money as Anglo districts. Historical studies reveal that the situation was worse around the turn of the century when today's elderly were young.

3. **Poverty**: Mexican-American families are among the poorest in the nation and the state. Nationally, the Mexican-American family income was $5,600 in 1971, or 70 percent that of other families. In Texas, 31 percent of the Mexican-American families were below the poverty level as compared to 15 percent for other families in the state.
4. **Family**: Mexican-Americans have the largest families and highest fertility rate in the nation. In Texas, six percent of the Mexican-American households are of the extended family structure, compared to three percent of the other ethnic groups' families. The mean size of the Mexican-American family is 4.7, while the mean family size for other families in Texas is 3.6. Poor Mexican-American families are even larger.

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2.2 Facets of Daily Life

Topic: Facts and Statistics of Elderly Mexican-Americans in Texas

Objectives:

1. Compare the elderly Mexican-Americans to other groups in Texas in terms of numbers and poverty level.
2. Identify three coping mechanisms which elderly Mexican-Americans in Texas lack.
3. Identify three physical problems which elderly Mexican-Americans have been shown to have.
4. Tell the approximate percentage of elderly Mexican-Americans in Texas who know and use curanderismo.

Activity: Lecture-slide presentation

Elderly Mexican-American Population of Texas

The characteristics of Mexican-American statistics in the census are even more pronounced for the elderly. In number, Mexican-American elderly are the lowest; their poverty rate is the highest. The life span of the Mexican-American (57 years) is shorter than the national average (67 years). In Texas, Mexican-Americans have the smallest percentage of elderly, 4.6 percent as compared to the 8.6 percent elderly in other ethnic groups.

While elderly Mexican-Americans are the smallest percent among the elderly, they are among the poorest in the state. The incidence or likelihood of being poor is highest for elderly Texans in general. And of the elderly, the Mexican-Americans have 46.8 percent incidence of poverty, compared to the Anglo rate of 29.9 percent. While Mexican-Americans and Blacks make up only 31 percent of the people over age 65, they comprise 90 percent of the elderly poor.

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Fewer Mexican-American elderly are receiving Social Security (60 percent) than the other elderly of the state (72 percent). And those Mexican-Americans who do receive Supplemental Security Income (SSI) receive smaller checks than Anglos or Blacks.

Seventy-seven percent of the state's elderly over age 65 live by themselves or with only one other person. Eighty-five percent of the poor elderly live in one or two person households. Only 70 percent of the Mexican-American elderly live in one or two person households. In other words, Mexican-American elderly live in slightly larger households than other elderly. It has been hypothesized that Mexican-American elderly receive smaller SSI payments because they continue to live in slightly larger households. In any case, all of these figures are extremely high considering the lack of coping mechanisms among these elderly. The figures paint a picture of potentially serious isolation among the elderly.

Coping Mechanisms

Elderly Mexican-Americans lack the basic communications and coping mechanisms.

1. **Telephone**: The government census rarely releases data on telephones, automobiles, or other necessary items for coping in American society, but several recent surveys have found significant facts in this category. One survey among elderly SSI recipients in Texas in 1976 found that 22 percent of the respondents had no telephone. Another survey in April 1977 among elderly Mexican-American SSI recipients in Austin found that 20 percent had no telephone.
2. **Automobile**: The Austin survey also found that 40 percent had no access to an automobile and over 50 percent found transportation difficult or impossible.
3. **Education**: In Texas, the elderly have the least education, and among the elderly, the Mexican-American education level is the lowest. In 1970, 14 percent of the Mexican-Americans had no education at all. In 1950, 28 percent had no education, compared to the Black figure of 6 percent and the Anglo figure of 1.2 percent for that year.
4. **Language**: Surveys of elderly Mexican-Americans in San Antonio (1976) and Austin (1977) found that over 95 percent had less than five years of education. Over half had no education at all. Although about half of them can speak at least some English, 85 to 90 percent prefer Spanish.
5. **Public Information Media**: The Austin survey found that 22 percent of the elderly Mexican-American SSI recipients had no radio, 19 percent had no TV, and 82 percent did not take the newspaper. All of these inadequate media facilities help to explain why

Mexican-American elderly respondents indicated a very low knowledge of the Department of Public Welfare, Social Security, and the other public services available to them as citizens.

Physical Problems

The surveys of elderly SSI recipients in Texas tend to indicate that Mexican-Americans suffer more from physical impairment than from illnesses. A statewide survey of SSI recipients found that Mexican-Americans suffered less than Anglos or Blacks in such illnesses as heart and circulation trouble, intestinal trouble, arthritis, and urinary tract disorders. Mexican-Americans reflected higher rates in diabetes, however. The SSI survey of elderly Mexican-Americans in Austin found that 52 percent of the respondents had inadequate eyesight, 22 percent had poor hearing, and 60 percent needed dental work. In each of these three categories, respondents did not know of or were hesitant to seek treatment or assistance from government programs.

Findings on Curanderismo

The San Antonio and Austin surveys of elderly Mexican-Americans revealed that about three-fourths of the respondents know and use the herbs and remedies of Mexican curanderismo. The surveys found such medicinal plants as *ruda, estafiate, yerba buena, salvia,* and *manzanilla* being commonly planted in flower beds and gardens.

Mexican-American elderly are beginning to make more trips to the doctor than other SSI recipients in the state, according to a statewide survey, so the medicinal herbs and knowledge are probably for cultural purposes as opposed to strictly medicinal use. Such persistence indicates the sensitivity of the issue of curanderismo, however.

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Ernesto Gomez, Harry W. Martin, and Guadalupe Gibson, "Adaptation of Older Mexican-Americans," Survey, San Antonio, Texas, 1976.

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2.2/3 notes

U.S., Bureau of the Census, *Census of Population: 1970*, Final Report PC(1)-C45, Texas (Washington, D.C.: G.P.O., 1972).

2.3 DPW and the Mexican-American

Topic: Relating Mexican-American Characteristics to the Caseworker

Objectives:

1. Given a physical description of an elderly Mexican-American, identify three probable needs.
2. Make an on-the-spot assessment of three critical coping mechanisms.
3. Identify aspects of curanderismo in clients' lives.

Activity: Lecture-slide presentation

Physical Impairments

A recent survey of elderly Mexican-American SSI recipients revealed a high percentage who suffered from physical impairments, but did not know that they qualified for medical aid. The impairments were obvious and, in many cases, went unreported or unnoticed by Department of Public Welfare caseworkers. The primary problems were poor eyesight, poor hearing, extremely limited mobility, and dental problems. Since many of these problems are covered by Medicaid or DPW social services, caseworkers should make an effort to detect these problems and make the clients aware of available services.

1. **Poor Eyesight**: The surest way to determine if a client needs eye care is to simply ask, "Can you see well enough to read or see an object in front of you?" There are also several telltale signs such as a client's constant squinting or wiping water from the eyes. Cataracts are sometimes visible by standing at close range. Another indication is when a client is wearing broken or poorly adjusted glasses. Many poor persons just borrow a relative's non-prescription glasses bought at a five and dime store.

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2. **Poor Hearing**: It is difficult to determine that a client is hard of hearing if the caseworker is speaking through a translator. But the hard-of-hearing client shows the classic hand cupped over the ear. Also, the translator can probably verify if the client has difficulty hearing well.
3. **Dental Problems**: Most elderly persons have dental problems. Many Mexican-American elderly have lived for years in rural settings or in migrant labor camps without the benefit of lavatories and toothbrushes. Their teeth may have cavities or be missing entirely. While many Americans are probably accustomed to regular dental care, migrants and poor people may be unacquainted with dentures or the availability of dental work to save bad teeth.
4. **Immobility**: Immobility is sometimes deceiving to an occasional visitor. Some indications of immobility are cases in which a client is always sitting in the same place when the caseworker comes to visit, or when a client's relative serves his meals at the sofa. An elderly person may be outdoors a lot, but if he's always sitting in the same location, it may be because of restricted mobility.

Assessing a Client's Coping Ability

Following is a list of coping mechanisms, the absence of which may limit a needy person's ability to obtain services from the Department of Public Welfare. They are primarily communication and transportation mechanisms. As a caseworker assesses his client's coping ability, he should ask, "Does my client have the coping mechanism or access to a substitute form of the mechanism?" If not, the caseworker may be beyond the reach of the client's ability.

1. Does he have a telephone or ready access to one?
2. Does he have a car, access to a car, or ready access to other forms of transportation?
3. Does he speak English, or is there a Spanish translator available?
4. Can he read the print or the language on the application forms?
5. Can he hear and see well enough to move about town or to the doctor's office?
6. Can he carry such objects as grocery bags, a pan of water, or a milk carton?

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7. Does he know and practice his rights as a citizen with regard to welfare services?

8. Does he have access to radio, TV, or some other media for public service information?

9. Would he know who to call in the event of an emergency?

10. Does he have friends or relatives who regularly check in on him?

Identifying Curanderismo

Note: These facts may be extremely sensitive to clients.

The most important fact to remember in identifying any dynamic cultural aspect is that it is practiced to different degrees by the people of the culture. Some elderly Mexican-Americans do no more than grow traditional herbs for the fragrance or greenery, such as *yerba buena* or mint. Others may prefer a curandero to a medical doctor. A caseworker should remember to determine "to what extent" a person practices curanderismo.

1. A caseworker may become aware of the practice of curanderismo if a client openly reveals certain attitudes or practices such as:
   - not wanting to take a medical doctor's medicine because he makes his own medicine from herbs;
   - going to a "friend" in the barrio for advice, medicine, or herbs;
   - taking a homemade tea every morning for physical discomfort or just good health;
   - giving a visitor a sprig of herbs and saying, "It's good for you."

2. During a visit to the home, a caseworker may notice such things as:
   - clumps of green flowerless plants by the front doorstep—not luxuriant but meticulously kept, maybe even surrounded by stakes for protection;
   - a small parcel of dried leaves on or near the altar in the bedroom;
   - a pot of mint or spicy tea on the stove;
   - a small black box of herbs labeled "Don Pedrito" with a picture of a gray-bearded man;
   - a bottle of alcohol containing green leaves;
   - a client rubbing a sore joint or muscle with moistened leaves;
   - a client feeling compelled to touch a person or item he has admired as if to disclaim any envy.

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3. Although unlikely, a caseworker may learn of one of the following practices in the client's household:
   - rubbing a sick person with an egg to lower fever;
   - reciting prayers and waving an object over a sick person;
   - placing a raw egg in a dish under a patient's bed.

Note:

Medicinal herbs include *estafiate, ruda, borraja, hoja se, salvia, yerba buena, manzanilla,* and *gobernadora.* Illnesses peculiar to curanderismo include *empacho, caida de mollera, susto, mal puesto,* and *mal de ojo.*

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2.4 Let's Talk About It

Topic: Simulated Interview and Needs Assessment of Elderly Mexican-American

Objectives:

1. See and experience interviewing problems resulting from language and cultural gap.
2. Observe factors which limit a thorough assessment of client's needs.
3. Practice detecting and identifying coping mechanisms, aspects of curanderismo, and extended family.

Activity: Role-playing and open discussion

2.4/1

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3.0 The Mexican-American Community

The Barrio
3.1 Perspective

Topic: Problems and Resources of the Barrio

Objectives:

1. List three undesirable characteristics of the barrio.
2. List three resources in the barrio.

Activity: Videotape

Formation of the Barrio

In the United States, the word barrio connotes a slum, a brown ghetto. Actually the traditional meaning of the word in Mexico and Spain was neighborhood.

The Texas barrio was born shortly after the turn of the century when Texas was industrializing and the Mexican-Americans began urbanizing. Another factor was the mass immigration of Mexicans into Texas at that time. Over 600 thousand Mexicans came into Texas between 1910 and 1920. Thus, as native Mexican-American citizens were moving into town, Mexican aliens poured into the same neighborhoods. To the Anglo residents who had urbanized generally thirty years earlier, there was no distinction between Mexican-American and Mexican alien—they were all just "Mexicans."

The barrio did not form by accident; several factors created it. First there were economic reasons. Mexican-Americans were employed largely in canneries, packing sheds, warehouses, and near agricultural fields, so their neighborhoods sprang up near their work. Mexicans, who were recruited heavily into railroad construction, lived near the depot in "row houses" built by the AT&SF or the Southern Pacific. Even today, the old part of many Texas barrios is to be found near or across the tracks.

But there were other factors creating the poverty and segregation in the barrio. City fathers zoned the barrio lots smaller to attract the poorer residents. Real estate agents

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offered easy access to barrio dwellings under usurious terms. Worse, many towns displayed signs or notices prohibiting Mexican-Americans in the nicer part of town.

Problems

As a result of economic segregation, the barrio suffers from inadequate facilities which are common even today. A barrio typically has many narrower, unpaved streets. It has fewer curbs and improved bridges. This results in clouds of dust being raised by passing autos in dry weather and causes mud, floods, and drownings in rainy weather. City utilities are also inadequate. Sewer and water mains are smaller, causing sewage back-up and low water pressure. The barrio typically has a high rate of violent crimes as opposed to white-collar crimes.

The barrio has often been called a colony of the modern city. While the barrio houses the tax-paying working man and the factories, it rarely has the city hall, the city hospital, or the nice shopping areas. Schools and churches have been traditionally segregated as well. So while the barrio provides taxes and labor, it receives fewer city services.

Resources

Mexican-Americans have often depended on their own resources to compensate for the problems of the barrio. One resource was the *escuelita* or Mexican-American field school conducted by a Mexican teacher in a neighborhood home. Every old barrio had a few *escuelitas*, and many of today's "uneducated" elderly Mexican-Americans learned the basics of reading, writing, and their Mexican history. Since parents paid for these schools out of their own pockets, Mexican-Americans actually paid double for education—they paid school taxes for the public schools which barred Mexican-Americans and they paid for their own *escuelitas* as well.

Another resource was the mutual aid society. Many Texas towns such as Austin, Waelder, Harlingen, Goliad, San Antonio, and Houston were headquarters for these Mexican-American insurance societies. A mutual aid society like the Sociedad Ignacio Zaragoza of Goliad, Texas, offered life, health, and unemployment insurance to its members. Since the members were neighbors and relatives in the barrio, the society retained a personal character which lent security to barrio residents. Modern migration and urbanization have scattered the society members far and wide, but many elderly Mexican-Americans still look to the barrio for their own form of "social security."

The curandero was often the only "doctor" available to Mexican-Americans. Barrios had no medical doctor, and

many medical doctors in smaller Texas towns refused to treat Mexican-Americans except in extreme cases. For the poor or remote barrio resident, the curandero's herbs were the only recourse available. Thus, many old barrio residents grew up totally removed from modern medicine.

The most important resource in the old barrio is the intangible sense of community, which the barrio retained long after America became a suburban society. In the barrio, a person knew he could borrow a ride from the fortunate few who owned automobiles. He knew he could use the grocer's telephone—often the only phone in the barrio. Or he knew the barber would lend him some money or help him fill out an application form in English. In a hundred ways, a resident depended on the resources of the old barrio—resources which many of the elderly still seek today.

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Marta Sotomayor, "Mexican-American Interaction with Social Systems," *Social Casework* 52 (May, 1971), pp. 316-322.

3.2 The Caseworker in the Barrio

Topic: Obstacles to effective interaction with elderly Mexican-Americans

Objectives:

1. List one possible caseworker obstacle to effective interaction.
2. List one possible client obstacle to effective interaction.

Activities: Lecture-slide presentation

Several obstacles may arise to obstruct communication between a caseworker and an elderly Mexican-American. There is no accurate method of recording which obstacles are most prevalent. But if a person is aware of them he can avoid them in himself.

Following are three possible caseworker-related obstacles to effective communication:

1. **Impersonality**: Because a caseworker is often pressed for time, he may allow his own preoccupation to affect his appearance or demeanor to the client. The caseworker may be thinking, "I must hurry on to my next ten interviews today," but to the client he appears to be thinking, "This old lady is slowing me down." To a client, the caseworker may appear overbearing or condescending. In such a case, a courteous client might just politely decline even badly needed services.
2. **Cultural Insensitivity**: A caseworker who does not know his clients' culture may literally put his foot in the wrong place. A caseworker who knows nothing of Mexican medicinal herbs may accidently step on a plant beside the doorstep. It would be just as harmful to make disparaging remarks or gestures about a client's extended family or inadequate English.

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3. **Stereotyping**: Stereotypes are invisible only to the person who believes them. To the person being stereotyped, they are blatant and familiar. A caseworker's remarks or actions may assume something in the client. For example, by saying, "Oh, you speak English so well," a caseworker is really saying, "I assumed all Mexican-Americans spoke only Spanish." Or by saying, "Oh, you were born in Texas," one assumes Mexican nativity.

Possible client-related obstacles to effective communication with elderly Mexican-Americans include the following:

1. **Lack of Coping Mechanisms**: The inability to read, write, or speak the same language is a basic obstruction to communication.
2. **Alienation**: Many elderly Mexican-Americans have had negative experiences with American government agencies. As a result they may react with distrust of the Department of Public Welfare. They may not be willing, for example, to reveal their age or place of birth. In a recent survey of elderly Mexican-Americans in Austin, half of the respondents felt that DPW caseworkers would readily give their client's confidential information to the Border Patrol, to the Internal Revenue Service, and to the Social Security Administration.
3. **Courteous or Indirect Refusal**: Mexican-American clients have been said by many caseworkers to courteously refuse services or involvement. Their responses are often indirect, such as saying the word "No" when the content or meaning of the response is really "yes." For example, when asked if he needs dental care, a client may respond"No, I can eat soft foods." This should not be misconstrued as dishonesty. It may in fact be pride. It is more likely apprehensiveness or unwillingness to reveal weaknesses or confidential information. It is related to the sense of alienation described above. Statistics have shown that these obstacles are rapidly being overcome in the Rio Grande Valley region. In any case, only the actual caseworker on the scene can make an accurate assessment and use his own judgment regarding such an obstacle.

References:

Texas, Department of Community Affairs, "Poverty in Texas, 1973 " (Austin, 1974).

Andrés A. Tijerina, "Assessment of Needs and Coping Mechanisms of Elderly Mexican-Americans," Austin, April 1977.

Andrés A. Tijerina, "Caseworker Attitudes and Knowledge of Mexican-American Culture," Survey and Confidential Report, May 1977.

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3.3 The Realities of Life in the Barrio

Topic: Everyday life of an elderly Mexican-American in the barrio

Objective:

Observe "first-hand" the realities of life in the barrio

Activities: Videotape or live interview of an elderly Mexican-American guest visitor.

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3.4 Now, What Do You Think?

Topic: Participants' Opinions and Open Discussion

Objectives:

1. Discuss Mexican-American culture in view of demónstrated or documented facts.
2. Share and compare experiences in an attempt to identify specific obstacles to communication.
3. Use self-analysis to identify possible caseworker-related obstacles.

Activity: Open discussion

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4.0 The Mexican-American Individual

4.1 That Person's Rights

Topic: Civil Rights of Particular Importance to Mexican-American Clients

Objectives:

1. Name the first American document guaranteeing citizenship to native Mexicans of the Southwestern United States.
2. Tell how the 14th Amendment has particular significance for many Mexican-Americans.
3. Name three American civil rights which have particular significance to Mexican-Americans.

Activity: Lecture-slide presentation

There are three 19th century documents which are important in the protection of the rights of Mexican-Americans. The first American document guaranteeing citizenship to the native Mexicans of the Southwestern United States was the Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo. Other 19th century documents were the 14th Amendment and the Republic of Texas Headright Land Grants.

1. **Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo:** The Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo was the treaty that ended the war between Mexico and the United States in 1848. After the United States forcibly took the land now constituting the Southwest, it signed the treaty granting in Article IX "all the rights of citizens of the United States" to the Mexicans who already lived there. Since Mexicans were not part of the United States at the time the Bill of Rights was ratified in 1791, the Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo has been called the "Mexican-American Bill of Rights."
2. The 14th Amendment to the United States Constitution has been of particular importance to Mexican-Americans because it defines the rights of nativity in

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the United States. Section I of the amendment says that "All persons born or naturalized in the United States. . . are citizens of the United States and of the State wherein they reside." This amendment was meant especially to clarify the citizenship of former Black slaves after the Civil War, but it also applies directly to children born to thousands of Mexican aliens in the United States. Even though the alien father may be a Mexican citizen, his children's citizenship is guaranteed by this amendment. A person born in Texas is a bona fide citizen of Texas regardless of his parent's nativity.

3. When Texas won her independence from Mexico in 1836, she granted citizenship and land to all persons residing in Texas at the time. The First Class Headright land grant thus guaranteed the citizenship of the original Mexican residents whose descendants still reside in Texas today.

Civil Rights Act

A basic right important to Mexican-Americans in Texas is the United States Civil Rights Act of 1964, which guarantees the protection of rights regardless of race, creed, or color. Before this 1964 federal act, Texas had only the ineffectual "Caucasian Resolution" of 1944 which only "resolved" that Caucasian should not discriminate against Caucasian in Texas.

The Department of Public Welfare has underscored the Civil Rights Act of 1964 in Social Services Handbook Section 2220.

What If He's an Alien?

The Department of Public Welfare Social Services Handbook states in Section 2220 on "Clients' Rights:" Paragraph 6 "Citizenship and Residency—A person who resides in Texas may qualify to receive services regardless of citizenship or duration of residency."

References:

Wayne Moquin, *A Documentary History of the Mexican-Americans* (N.Y.: Praeger, 1971).

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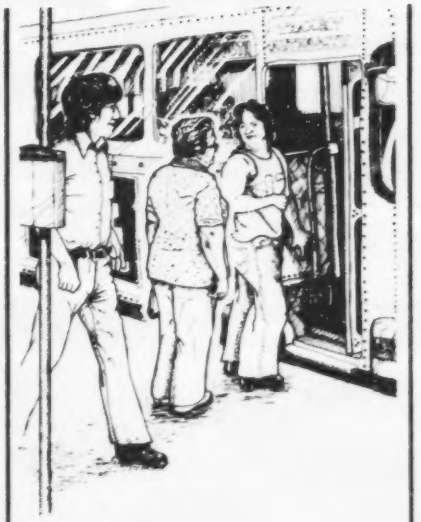
Texas, Department of Public Welfare, Social Services Handbook.

U.S., *Constitution*, Amendments, Article XIV.

4.2 In American Society



Topic: The Mexican Culture in American Life

Objective:
Identify three aspects of modern culture in Texas that are of Mexican origin.

Activity: Videotape

In viewing or studying the Mexican culture, many American writers have overlooked the many aspects which Americans have borrowed. If these borrowed aspects could be identified, perhaps the Mexican culture would be seen from a different perspective.

When the Anglo-American frontier arrived in Texas in the 1820's, the Mexican culture had been established here for over a century. The Anglo-Americans who came westward into Texas were buckskin pioneer farmers like Davy Crockett or Stephen F. Austin. They walked in leather moccasins and planted corn, wheat and tobacco. But when they left Texas to continue their westward trek to the Pacific after 1850, they had changed from the coonskin-capped pioneers to mounted cowboys. In the three decades before the end of the Mexican War in 1848, the Americans had taken on almost every aspect of the Mexican life that existed in Texas before 1820.

In Texas, the Mexican taught the Anglo-American how to work huge herds of longhorns by horseback; how to rope and break a wild mustang; and how to dress for the work on horseback. That is why the cowboy's dress and terminology is almost exclusively Mexican–from the boots and spurs to the lariat, lasso, rodeo and rancho.

More important, the Anglo-American learned about the management of resources. He borrowed Mexican laws for management of livestock, water, and land which are still basics of Texas law and government. For example, the Texas

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laws on community property are based on the old Tejano laws giving the woman rights to own personal property before and after marriage. Water flowing through rivers in Texas belongs to the people, in keeping with the Mexican principle. The river bank may belong to a rancher, but the water belongs to the people.

The Mexican cultural traits which Anglo-American society did not borrow are the same traits which American anthropologists have tended to label as pathological and self-destructive. They involve the Mexican attitude toward race, family, and community. Today, social work professionals are beginning to realize that these traits are valuable if viewed from a positive perspective. The Mexican culture traits in Texas are not difficult to identify. They are the traits which make Texas distinctive. They include the colorful ranching industry, the vast land grants, and the informal pace of living. New Englanders rarely enjoy barbeque and beans on the patio at the ranch. Texans can thus be thankful to the Mexican heritage of their state.

References:

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Carey McWilliams, *North From Mexico* (N.Y.: Greenwood Press, 1968).

Sandra Myres, *The Ranch in Spanish Texas* (El Paso: Texas Western Press, 1969).

4.3 Finding Himself

Topic: Social Trends, the Mexican-American, and DPW

Objective:

List three major social trends and tell how each has influenced the present social status of the Mexican-American.

Activity: Lecture-slide presentation

The major social trends in the Mexican-American's recent past in Texas have tended to contribute to a sense of alienation. The alienation, in turn, makes it difficult for elderly Mexican-Americans to relate to modern caseworkers, or vice-versa.

Immigration

Mexicans have moved across the Rio Grande into Texas since the early 1800's when it was legal. In the 1870's, Texas saw an increase of poor Mexicans coming into the Blackland Prairies between San Antonio and Houston. When the 1910 Mexican Revolution erupted, hundreds of thousands of Mexicans poured into Texas. These were wealthy as well as poor Mexicans. They settled also in rural areas of the Blackland Prairie and the Rio Grande Valley. By 1920, many of the counties such as Caldwell, Comal and Karnes had as high as 90 percent Mexican immigrant populations in the rural communities and areas.

Many of the Mexican-born in Texas today are of this generation of immigrants, and are now potential DPW clients. Although they are Mexican citizens, most have lived and worked in Texas for over half a century; they have fully-grown American families; and they have no hope of ever returning to Mexico.

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Urbanization

By the 1920's, farm life was beginning to decline in Texas. The thousands of Mexican immigrants began to join native Tejano citizens of Texas in a steady flow into the 20th century metropolitan areas. Houston and San Antonio suddenly bulged with their overcrowded barrios. Other cities such as Brownsville, Corpus Christi, Dallas, Austin, and El Paso began to attract their own share of Mexicans and Mexican-Americans.

The Mexican and Mexican-American urbanites were the last ethnic group to move into the cities, other ethnic groups having urbanized by the 1870's. Thus, Mexican-Americans were seen as latecomers. Their cultural difference was compounded by an unfriendly urban setting. Younger Mexican-Americans have begun to assert themselves in the urban milieu, but the elderly have, in most cases, internalized the sense of being unwanted by the city. Without knowing this, a modern caseworker may misinterpret an elderly Mexican-American's attitude as hostile or confused when it may actually be one of precaution or even fear.

Repatriation

During the Depression, economic hardship fell especially hard on the newly urbanizing and rural Mexican immigrants and Mexican-Americans in Texas. When they came to the local welfare agencies for relief, they were often rejected or handed over to the Immigration Service for deportation. In 1931, the Immigration Service began a program of "repatriation." Immigration Service agents searched automobiles and houses throughout the barrios. In thousands of cases, Mexican-born parents were whisked away to remote parts of Mexico. Since the law allowed for their American-born families to "voluntarily" accompany them, untold numbers of Mexican-American citizens were deported to Mexico. Today, the elderly remember the total lack of regard for family and individual dignity displayed by the U.S. Government. The integral role played by the welfare agents in this "repatriation" program may help to explain why many elderly Mexican-Americans still call the DPW caseworker an "investigator."

Migration

When the economic depression of the 1930's shattered, once and for all, the economic basis of the small farm in Texas, hundreds of thousands of Mexican and Mexican-American sharecroppers or *medieros* (med YEH ro) were driven into migrant life. Overcrowdedness, unemployment, and job discrimination forced almost half of the Mexican-

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Americans in Texas into life in the cotton fields around the state from 1930 to 1960.

Migrants lived in trucks, tents, barns, and in unimproved labor camps. They had the nation's highest mortality and disease rates for decades. Prohibited from entering many Texas cities or from using public facilities, these Mexican-American citizens had to adapt to a way of life which scarcely allowed for bathtubs, toilets, private bedrooms and kitchens, or any form of aid from the government. An Agricultural Extension study in 1953 found farmers in West Texas counties closing down schools that registered Mexican-American migrant children for classes. (Texas Agricultural Extension Service, *Cotton and Manpower*, Bulletin 762, 1953) Needless to say, all of these factors reflect heavily in education, mortality, and other social patterns of Mexican-American life even today. Another obvious result is the actual movement of the Mexican-American population from the south-central Texas region to the central, north, and west Texas cities which grew in the 1950's and 1960's- Lubbock, Midland, Abilene, etc.

The net result for the caseworker is that he may encounter elderly Mexican-Americans who appear hostile, disbelieving or distrustful, overly agreeable, or anxious to part company. The caseworker may never see any of these traits in an elderly Mexican-American. In intercultural relations, nevertheless, it is imperative that the caseworker be able to identify and understand significant cultural traits in himself and in the client. He can then proceed to the business at hand–the delivery of services.

References:

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Pauline Kibbe, *Latin-Americans in Texas* (Albuquerque: Univ. of New Mexico, 1946).

Carey McWilliams, *Ill Fares the Land* (N.Y.: Barnes & Noble, 1941).

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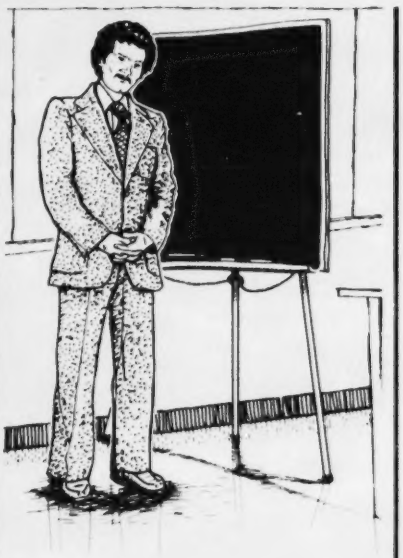
4.4 Now, What Do You Think?



Topic: Open Discussion and Final Evaluation

Activity: Discuss, review, and evaluate curriculum

4.4/1

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